possible to watch it closely enough that nothing but necessary supplies were taken, and further that, when it marched through South Carolina, a feeling seized upon the soldiers that, as South Carolina had started the whole secession mischief, it w.as no more than right to make the South Carolinians suffer for it.

Many years later I had a conversation with General Sherman on this subject. He frankly admitted that the necessity of "living on the country " by more or less systematic foraging had relaxed the discipline of the troops to a dangerous degree, and that the grudge of the soldiers against South Carolina as the original " secession-hole " and the instigator of the rebellion, had certainly existed and brought forth deplorable consequences. He emphatically denied, however, having made, as he affirmed, the fullest and most careful and impartial investigation, that the fire which destroyed the city of Columbia had been started by his troops. " But," he said, " before we got out of that State, the men had so accustomed themselves to destroying everything along the line of march that sometimes, when I had my headquarters in a house, that house began to burn before I was fairly out of it. The truth is/[3] he added, " human nature is human nature. You take the best lot of young men, all church members, if you please, and put them into an army, and let them invade the enemy's country, and live upon it for any length of time, and they will gradually lose

all principle and self-restraint to a degree beyond the control of discipline. It always has been and always will be so. When a fair-minded man who knows something about war, examines the conduct of my troops under the circumstances, he will not be surprised at what they did, but he will be surprised that it was no worse. At any rate, I was very glad when I had my army out of those States."